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The Mother of God in the Syriac Tradition

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THE MOTHER OF GOD IN THE SYRIAC TRADITION

SAMUEL THYKOOTTAM

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The Mother of God in the Syriac Tradition

SECTION I

1. The Liturgy 5
2. The Development of the Liturgy in Syrian Traditions 6
3. How Mary is related in the Celebration of the Liturgy 12

SECTION II 13

SECTION III The Typology of Mary 22

SECTION IV

1. Virgin and Mother 28
2. Mary Conceived Without Sin 32

SECTION V

Mariology in the East Syrian Liturgy 34

SECTION VI

Efficacious intercession of the Mother of God 39

SECTION I

Before discussing the subject in detail, we should first have some preliminary notions about what the term 'Liturgy' means, how it developed in the Syrian Traditions and how Mary is related to its celebrations. Hence we shall give some general notions about these in this Introductory Section.

1. The Liturgy:

The Liturgy of the Church is 'the celebration of the Economy of Salvation'. For, it is said in 'the Constitution of the Sacred Liturgy' Vat. II. "The minds of the faithful should be directed primarily toward the feasts of the Lord whereby the Mysteries of Salvation are celebrated throughout the year. For this reason, 'the Proper of the Time' shall be given due preference over the feasts of the Saints so that the entire cycle of the Mysteries of Salvation may be suitably recalled" (no. 108).

N. B. "Proper of Time" means the sequence of the feasts pertaining directly to Christ in the whole sequence of the Mystery of Salvation.

MEANS OF THIS CELEBRATION:

The means of this celebration of the Economy of Salvation are:-

i) the celebration of the Holy Eucharist
ii) the celebration of the Liturgical Hours
iii) the celebration of the Sacraments
iv) the celebration of the Sacramentals (Services)

THE HOLY EUCHARIST:

The central act of Christian Liturgy is the celebration of the Holy Eucharist. Pope Pius XII in his encyclical "Mediator

Dei" defines Liturgy as "the public worship which our Redeemer as head of the Church renders to the Father, as well as the worship which the community of faithful to its Founder and through him to the heavenly Father". In other words, it is the public worship rendered by the Mystical Body of Christ in its entirety, of its head and members, to the Father".

In the celebration of the Holy Eucharist, Christ the High Priest and his faithful through the priest of the New Testament offer the highest form of worship to the Father.

THE LITURGICAL HOURS:

It is meant to sanctify the whole day through the offering of praise and thanks-giving which is due to God.

THE SACRAMENTS:

They are the divinely instituted means to meet with Christ and to partake of his Divine Life.

THE SACRAMENTALS (SERVICES)

They are the celebration of the events of Salvation connected with the earthly life of Christ.

2. The Development of the Liturgy in Syrian Traditions:

The Syrian Church has developed its Liturgy in a three fold manner:

i) The Liturgy of the day
ii) The Liturgy of the week
iii) The Liturgy of the year

THE LITURGY OF THE DAY:

The Economy of Salvation of the day consists in 'Six Hours'. In other words, the day is divided into six Liturgical Hours: Ramso, Sutoro, Lilio, Sapro, III Hour, VI Hour, and IX Hour. The division of these Hours, according to the Eastern Fathers, is based on the Salvific events of our Lord, precisely on his passion and death.

RAMSO: Iustitution of the Holy Eucharist, memorial of the Paschal Mysteries, during the paschal meal in the Upper Room.

SUTORO: Mental agony in the garden of Gathsemen.

LILIO: Trial before Annas, Chaiphas and Herod.

SAPRO: Trial before Pilate-Condemnation to death on the Cross.

III HOUR: Carrying the Cross to Calvary.

VI HOUR: Crucifixion and agony on the Cross.

IX HOUR: Death on the Cross and Burial.

THE LITURGY OF THE WEEK:

The grand theme of the week is the 'Resurrection' which is commemorated and celebrated on every Sunday. There are particular themes for each day of the week and the canonical prayers of the day are arranged basing on these themes.

MONDAY: The basic theme is ***Repentance***.

The new life with the coming of the kingdom of God.
A Baptism for repentance.....for social justice.
The Holy Spirit rests on Jesus in river Jordan and in Nazareth Jesus begins his mission of Salvation with a call to Repentance.

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, said Jesus,
to proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom of God,
to announce the Gospel to the poor,
to tell the prisoners that they are prisoners no more,
and the blind that they can see,
and the downtrodden that they are set free,
to tell every one that the Kingdom of God has come".

Evening Prayer, Response for the Kingdom of God.

TUESDAY: The main theme of the day is ***the Church***. The Kingdom of God is made present in the Church through the Word of God, the Sacraments and the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit.

"Church of Christ, born from his side on the Cross,
in you men are built into a spiritual dwelling for God.
In you is the Gospel of life, the gift of the Holy spirit,
in whom we are reborn of water to share in God's life.
He hovers over our assemblies as over the primordial waters.
He sanctifies the bread of life into a memorial of immortality

restoring in us the liberty of the children of God,
the first-fruits of the Lord's coming in glory".

Common response for the Church.

WEDNESDAY: *Devotion to Mary*

The incarnation of the Son of God through Mary's surrender to his Word. Her divine Motherhood through the Holy Spirit.

"Blessed are you pride of humanity,
blessed are you who became Mother of God.
Like a sweet perfume breathes on the air,
Your memory, O Mary, pervades our prayer".

Evening prayer.

THURSDAY: Devotion to the *Apostles, Saints and Martyrs...*

Who were the first witnesses to the teaching of Christ, and who laid down their lives in professing Christian faith. The day of Christ's memorial, the day on which he celebrated the

Holy Eucharist with his Apostles; now celebrated in the Churches and all over the world.

"In the evening, O Good one, you give a good reward
to those who have worked in your Vineyard,
the diligent who have worked all day,
but those also who have come at the eleventh hour
you count worthy of your Grace".

Hymn of the Evening, Evening prayer.

"Tell us, blessed Martyrs, what is the sight you saw
when you were standing in the court before the judges?
we saw swords and fire kindled,
and the holy Spirit who weaves crowns
and places them on the heads of his Saints".

Morning prayer.

FRIDAY: Devotion to *the Holy Cross:*

Christ's suffering and death on the Cross, the Tree of Life. The witnessing of the Martyrs for whom the Holy Spirit weaves crowns of glory.

"I saw three crosses very different from one another.
That on the right is alive and not dead.

That on the left is dead and not alive.
That in the middle makes me marvel.
It is like one who wakes while he sleeps.
It is like one who lives while he dies.
It is the Son of man who is God",
Night Vigil, I watch.

SATURDAY: Commemoration of the *Departed and the Parousia.*

The mystery of the end of our life here on earth: the consumation of all things, Christ's coming in glory, his parousia; our expectation of the resurrection of the bodies.

"when the sound of the horn is heard in the heights
and the voice of the trumpets sounds,
the graves and the rocks shall be rent
and the dead shall rise.....
Renew, O Full of Mercy, your creatures by the resurrection,
your servants and your worshippers who have slept in your hope".
Night Vigil, III watch

THE LITURGY OF THE YEAR OR THE CROWN OF THE YEAR.

The economy of Salvation is very well brought out in the crown of the Year—the cycle of the Liturgical Year.

It starts with the two Sundays of the consecration and Dedication of the church. They fall toward the end of November. The Liturgical Year is divided into seven Seasons of more or less seven weeks' duration. This division provides a perfect frame work for the celebration of the Economy of Salvation.

The seven seasons are:

1. Annunciation of the Lord's coming.
2. The Nativity, Baptism and Epiphany of our Lord.
3. The Fast of our Lord and his Passion.
4. The Resurrection of our Lord and Pentecost.
5. The Apostles, their mission to the world.
6. The Transfiguration of our Lord on the Mountain.
7. The Holy Cross.

EVERY Season has its theme related to the Economy of Salvation. Of these Seasons two stand out prominent, that of the Resurrection Pentecost and the Nativity-Epiphany. The preparation for these events is marked with special prayer and fast.

The Baptism and Epiphany, known also as the feasts of the light, comes as the great theophany; the revelation of the Blessed Trinity and the Messiahship of Jesus of Nazareth. At the time of the Baptism of Jesus in river Jordan the voice of the Father "This is my beloved Son in whom I am pleased" was heard and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in the form of a dove, thus manifesting Jesus as the Messiah. The whole Season celebrates the mystery of God's forgiveness of man's sin through the humiliation of his Son in the water of Jordan. The Son is manifested as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

The church is the continuation of Jesus Christ. The mystery of the Church is manifested in the Season of Pentecost, the great theophany of the Holy Spirit. This embraces three Seasons:

i) The Season of the Apostles
ii) The Season of the Transfiguration
iii) The Season of the Cross; the Season of the mystery of the recapitulation of the whole Economy of salvation.

When we analyse the order and prayers of the Syrian Liturgy we find that all mysteries of Christian faith; the Trinity, the Incarnation, the Cross, the Redemption and the Second coming, the Church as the Bride of Christ, Mary, the Mother of God and the Saints of the Old and New Testaments, the Dead in Sheol and the expectation of the return to Paradise are all treated there in a wonderful manner to the full sense of the dictum "Lex orandi, lex credendi".

EASTERN CHURCHES AND THEIR EXPERIENCE OF THE DIVINE MYSTERIES

Some general notions about the Oriental Churches and their experience of the divine mysteries also are beneficial.

The term 'Eastern Churches' refers to the Churches which developed in the eastern half of the Roman Empire, along with

these, the communities which were founded in dependance upon them, even though these dependent Churches were found outside the boundaries of the Roman Empire. And the Liturgies evolved in these Churches were called the Eastern Liturgies.

All Eastern Churches evolved from the Patriarchates of Constantinople; Alexandria and Antioch and the two Churches of Persia and Armania respectively, which developed outside the Roman Empire. Five characteristic Rites that developed within these five Ecclesiastical Provinces were known as; the Alexandrian, Antiochene, Byzentine, East Syrian (Persian) and Armanian.

The experience of the Divine Mysteries vary from person to person and from Nation to Nation. The experience of an ordinary faithful about the Salvific events of Christ may not be the same as that of a theologian or a mystic. We know that the Christ-experience of the Apostles themselves were varying. 'You are Christ the Son of the living God' (Mt. 16:16) was the Christ-experience of Peter; whereas 'My Lord and my God' (St. John 20: 28) was the Christ-experience of St. Thomas. Each Apostle had his own experience of Christ, the Master. The same thing could be said about the experience of the Saving Events of Christ. Similarly, the expression of the Divine Mysteries differ from Nation to Nation, because they are expressed by means of the philosophical thought-pattern and cultural heritage of each nation, which are not the same for every nation. Thus the Greek, the Orient and Rome explain the divine mysteries of faith according to their varied philosophical thought-pattern and cultural heritage.

In general we can say that the characteristic notes of the Western Christianity are its clarity of Expression,Brevity and Dogmatic Formulae. Those of the East, however, especially of the Christian Orient are Elaborate, poetic decked with parables, symbols, types and paradoxes. For many of the Oriental Fathers and Theologians God and the Divine Truths are so sublime and lofty that human expressions, however profound, are not adequate to explain them. Hence we see that the early Fathers and Theologians like Aphrates, Ephrem,Theodore, Jacob of Sarung, Balai etc., using these poetic expressions in their writings; prayers, hymns and supplications.

3. How Mary is Related in the Celebration of the Liturgy.

If 'Economy of Salvation' is the content of the celebration of the Liturgy, then Mary has to be in this celebration since she is the Mother of the Saviour, the mother of God. The person whom Mary gave birth to is the Divine person. However, it is to be noted that St. Ephrem, the renowned theologian of the Eastern Church never used the expression 'Mother of God' without specification. "Mary brought forth *the Son of God*", "She gave birth *to Christ*" These are some of his expressions about the divine Motherhood of Mary. But in his own poetic expressions he says "In your arms you embraced the flame and gave milk to the devouring fire; blessed is he who was born of you" (Book of the weekly Prayer, Tuesday, Night Vigil, I watch, qolo). This shows the faith of the Eastern Church in the theology of the Incarnation.

Mary was not only the Mother of Jesus she actively cooperated in all the Salvific Events of the Saviour. Her 'Fiat' (let it be done to me according to thy word) was but the beginning of her self-surrender to the will of God. She renewed this self-surrender throughout the Saviour's life, from Bethlahem to Calvary; nay even further when Jesus handed over her to the care of his beloved disciple John, so as to be the Mother of the Church as well. She was presiding over the community of the Apostles who prayerfully awaited for the coming of the Holy spirit in the Cenacle, the birthplace of the Church. She shows her maternal solicitude in every faithful, member of the Mystical Body of Christ and she continues her powerful intercession for our sake in heaven. Infact, 'an immense veneration paid to Mary as Mother of God' is one of the outstanding characteristic features of the Oriental Liturgy.

With these preliminary notions we pass on to the detailed study of "Mary, the Mother of God in the Syrian Liturgical Traditions".

We have divided the topic under the following heads:

1. Mary, the chosen one of God and the Church's response to her choice.
2. The Typology of Mary.
3. The prerogatives of Mary as Mother of God.
4. Mariology in the East Syrian Liturgy.
5. Efficacious intercession of Mary as Mother of God.

SECTION II

In order to illustrate and explain the Subject of our study we have chosen pertinent passages, mainly, from the Liturgical prayers of the Syrian Church, both from 'The book of the Common Prayer' which contains the prayers of the week days and from 'The Books of the Crown of the Year' which contain the prayers of Sundays and Feast days. These being the official prayers of the Church, explain the faith of the Church; for, "Liturgy is living Theology". These passages deal with the extraordinary privileges bestowed upon Mary as Mother of God.

MARY, THE CHOSEN ONE OF GOD AND THE CHURCH'S RESPONSE TO HER CHOICE

God's promise of a Saviour is as old as the fall of man. In the Scriptures we read thus: "I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your seed and her seed; he shall bruise your head and you shall bruise his heel" (Genesis 3:15).

The woman referred to in this passage, of course, is Mary and her off-spring who would crush the head of the serpent is Jesus, the Saviour.

God is faithful in his promise. His promise was fulfilled when in the fullness of time the Son of God was born of the Virgin Mary.

In the Eucharistic prayer (Sedro) of the Feast of the Annunciation, Evening prayer, we read: "Praise and thanks giving to you, Jesus Christ, our God who created human beings in your image and sealed them with the likeness of your majesty. And when on account of the rebellion against your commandment they were exiled from their former inheritance, their cry entered into your presence and you mercifully heard their groaning.

You willed to save and deliver them up from the fall, you *inclined the heavens* and descended on earth. While you

did not cease to be God and departed not from the high and lofty throne of your Being, you entered into the womb of the Virgin. You who gave the expectation of a birth to Abraham, your conception was announced by a watcher. You gladdened the Virgin with a message of peace instead of the sentence of exile pronounced against Eve, our first Mother. Gabriel cried out to her and said "peace be with you full of Grace, the Lord is with you, blessed among women". And when by his message of peace he made clear that the ancient hedge of enmity which the adversary had planted was removed".

'Prayer with the Harp of the Holy Spirit.' Vol. II. p. 50

We read here that the curse incurred by mankind through the disobedience of Eve was removed by the docility and self-surrender of Mary, the Second Eve, the chosen vessel of God.

"You inclined the heavens and descended on earth', is a special usage of the Syrian Liturgy which we often find in the Sedros of the Eucharistic celebration as well as of the Canonical Hours and Services. This phrase signifies 'the reconciliation of heaven and earth' through the incarnation. The rupture that occurred between God and man due to man's disobedience and sin was set right by the divine emptying through Incarnation.

The greeting of the angel to Mary *"Peace be with You"* also signifies the results of Incarnation; i. e., being under the clutches of satan due to sin man was at logger heads with God and He became man to establish peace between God and mankind.

On the Feast of the 'Praises of the Mother God' which falls on December 26, we sing in the hymn for the Mother of God:

"Blessed is Christ who *chose you, Mary,* daughter of David, among all peoples of the creation and took a body from you..."

Evening Prayer

Mary exalted by God:

> "Glory to him who for our sake so lowered his Majesty. He exalts and honours the memory of his Mother in the four quarters of the earth".

Mary exalted by the creatures:

> "All creatures exalt you and praise you, Virgin full of grace, for you brought forth the Son of God".

The Church exalts Mary:

"On the day of the memory of Mary, Mother of our Saviour, heaven and earth rejoice, the watchers with the sons of men. The bones of the just exult at the bottom of their graves and sing praise and thanksgiving to the Lord who magnifies his holy Mother".

"The Holy Church rejoices and proclaims his Mother Blessed. Glory to him who came to save us from the slavery of sin". op. cit. p. 404.

IN THE SUPPLICATION SONG OF THE SAME FEAST:

Mary, the blessed one.

"Blessed are you, Mary, who became the Mother of the Son of God. Through you are restored those who had fallen and had been driven out of the house of the Father".

"Blessed are you, who became a Second Heaven in which the Lord rested".

"Blessed are you, who carried and nursed and cradled on your knees the hero of the world who carries the earth by his secret power".

"Blessed are you, who placed your pure lips on the mouth of him before whom the winged creatures of fire hide themselves that they may not be consumed". op. cit. p. 405.

Night Vigil, I watch

Mary, God's master-piece:

"You are the crown of God's works, Mary, Mother of the Saviour, a precious diadem in the hands of our Lord. Pride of the Holy Spirit, pure delight of the Most High, rejoice and exult, for the King desires your beauty".

Response (Eniyono)

Mary, the incomparable:

"Who is able to weave a crown of praise worthy of your purity, O virgin, Mother of God? You are the giver of life to the world. You are the book in which are revealed all the mysteries of the prophets. You are the wondrous ark which contained him who gives the law to the world. You are the ornament and the pride of the earthly ones, the joy and the exultation of the heavenly ones". (Eucharistic prayer Sedro.)

"Bethlahem sings praise, Nazareth gives glory, on the day of the remembrance of Mary, the Mother of Christ. In the former he was born, in the latter he grew up".

Hymn of the Mother of God.

II Watch;

Mary, the Mother of the Saviour:

"What mouth or tongue is able to praise Mary, the holy Virgin, Mother of God? Is not the mystical mountain worthy of wonder from which was cut the corner-stone which is the Messiah who is before the world? Who would not wonder at the Virgin Mary? She was greater than the chariot which Ezekiel saw, that carried the glory, but Mary carried and bore the coal of fire, the mystery of the holy Flesh to which the Firey ones dare not approach. Since she is truly the Mother of God, we who are poor and lowly will call her greatly blessed .... ". Eucharistic prayer.

Mary indebted to God for all her greatness:

"You blessed me my Son when I became your Mother. You blessed me when you made me worthy to see your face. Henceforth all generations shall call me blessed, halleluia, because I have given birth to you".

"Blessed are you, O Blessed Mother, who were worthy to carry in your arms the fire which Moses saw on mount Sinai, and you sucked with your pure milk the wise Fashioner who by a gesture makes the drops of rain". Hymn of the Mother.

IV Watch.

"Blessed are you, Mary who became Mother of God. Through you, his exiled children are restored to Paradise.

Blessed are you, Virgin, whose breast gives milk to him who by a single word makes the depths of the sea overflow".

Hymn of the Mother.

FEAST OF THE ENTRANCE OF MARY IN THE TEMPLE

Evening prayer:

Mary the daughter of predilection:

"O Mary, you are wholly admirable,
All holy in your being,

noble in your thoughts,
Your generation is great before the Lord.
Daughter of David, daughter of Abraham,
chosen from the beginning,
offer prayers and supplications to your beloved Son,
that he may be gracious to all".

Response (Ekbo)

Mary, adorned as befitting the Mother of God:

"Who can be found to tell of your high and heavenly beauty, Virgin pure and undefiled, who made God to appear when he took flesh in your pure and virgin womb? Or who would not be struck with wonder while with Jacob the Patriarch he would say 'How awe-inspiring is this place! This is no other than the gate of heaven'.....

You are in truth the Mother of the living Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. At the beginning the earthly Adam by means of his rib handed over this world to Eve for the propagation of our race. But at the end of time you brought forth in flesh the heavenly Adam in purity and without the pangs of child-birth, for the sake of our salvation, the new and spiritual generation". Sedro

Mary, pure and spotless:

"The Virgin Mary was chosen from the beginning to be the exalted Mother of the Word of God. Her noble body was kept in all purity and holiness. And the soul free all stain, that she might offer pure worship. And the power of the Most High rested in her womb".

Hymn of the Mother.

"Come, marvel at the pure one,
wholly admirable in her own self,
the only one in the whole creation
to have given birth without having known man.
Young dove, you bore the Son
and became the dwelling of the Ancient of Days
Gentle dove, of all the songs of birds
You are the most beautiful".

Boutho (Supplication song).

Night Vigil.
I Watch.
Prophecies fulfilled in Mary:

> "With festive praises of the Holy spirit we sing to the blessed Virgin Mary. With blessed Joel the Prophet we say 'Fear not O Land, be glad and rejoice, the Lord has done great things'.
>
> Truly, Mary is the Land on which the thorn of sin has never grown, the Land which bore him who has torn up sin by the root, the land which, without being sown, has yielded the fruit which nourishes every thing that exists.....".
>
> Eucharistic prayer

As an answer to the prayers of Mary's parents:

> "He heard their prayer and gladdened them with the child, Mary, chosen from the beginning to be Mother of God, born in purity, all holy, free from all stain".
>
> Hymn

TYPOLOGY OF MARY IN S'HIMO

Type	*Reference in S'himo*		*Ref. in the Bible*
MARY, MOTHER OF GOD			
	Mon	Ramso, Qolo	
	Wed	Sapro, Qolo	
Mary, a ship	Thurs	Ramso, Qolo	
	Thurs	Liliyo Bo'utho of Mar Jacob	
	Mon	Liliyo, Bo'utho, Ist Watch	
	Tues	Ramso, Sedro	
	Tues	Liliyo, Sedro, Ist Watch	
The Second Heaven	Wed	Ramso, Qolo	Rev. 21:1 ff
	Wed	Sapro, Qolo	
	Frid	Lilio, Qolo Ist Watch	
	Sat	VI Hour, Qolo	
	Tues	Sapro, Qolo	I King 16:29
The fleeting cloud	Wed	Ramso, Qolo	18:42-44
	Mon	Liliyo, Sedro, Ist Watch	
	Tues	Liliyo, Sedro, Ist Watch	
	Tues	Sapro, Qolo	
The Chariot of Ezekiel	Wed	Ramso, Qolo	Ezek. 1:4-28
	Wed	Liliyo, Qolo, Ist watch	
	Wed	III Hour, Qolo	
	Sat	Liliyo, Qolo, Ist Watch	
	Wed	Ramso, Sedro	
	Wed	Ramso, Qolo	
	Wed	Sapro, Qolo	
The ark of the Covenant	Wed	VI Hour, Qolo	Numb. 17:8-9
	Thurs	Liliyo, Bo'utho, Ist Watch	Hebr. 9:4-5
	Thurs	Liliyo, Ekbo, Ist Watch	
	Frid	Liliyo, Sedro	
The pot that contained Manna	Wed	Ramso, Qolo	Exod. 16:5
	Thurs	VI Hour, Qolo	Numb. 11:6-7
	Wed	Ramso, Qolo	

Type	*Reference in S'himo*		*Ref. in the Bible*
The Road of Aaron	Wed	III Hour, Qolo	Numb. 17:8
	Thurs	VI Hour, Qolo	
The new Jar of Elizha	Wed	Ramso, Qolo	II King 2:19:22
The tree which gave forth the lamb.	Wed	III Hour, Qolo	Gen. 22:13
The rock that flowed forth water.	Wed	III Hour, Qolo	Exod. 17:5 ff
	Sat	Sapro, Qolo	
The fish which gave forth a coin.	Wed	III Hour, Qolo	Math. 17:27
The veil of God-head that covered the face of Moses	Wed	Sapro, Qolo	Exod. 34:33
The harp of Isaiah	Wed	Sapro, Qolo	Is. 7:13-14
	Thurs	Sapro, Qolo	Isam. 16:13
The Lyre of David	Tues	Sapro, Qolo	II Sam. 6:5
			Ps. 48:1, 81:3

MARY HOLY VIRGIN

	Mon	Sapro, Qolo	
	Tues	Liliyo, Qolo, Ist Watch	
The burning	Tues	Sapro, Qolo	Exod. 3:2-4
Bush which	Thurs	VI Hour, Qolo	
Moses saw	Fri	Liliyo, Sedro, Ist Watch	
	Sat	Ramso, Qolo	
	Mon	Liliyo, Sedro, Ist Watch	
	Tues	Liliyo, Qolo, Ist Watch	
The closed	Wed	Liliyo, Qolo, Ist Watch	
door of the	Thurs	Sapro, Qolo	Ezek. 1:4ff
chariot of Ezek	Fri	Liliyo, Sedro, Ist Watch	
The enclosed garden and sealed	Wed	Liliyo, Qolo, Ist Watch	
Fountain	Thurs	Sapro, Qolo	Song of Songs 4:12
	Mon	Sapro, Qolo	
	Wed	Ramso, Boutho	

A pearl without stain	Wed	Sapro, Ekbo	
	Fri	VI Hour, Qolo	
The Fleece of Gideon	Tues	Liliyo, Sedro, Ist Watch	Judg 6:36-40
	Wed	Ramso, Qolo	
The light cloud of the glorious-Isaiah	Wed	Ramso, Qolo	Is. 4:5, 18:4, 19:1.

MARY, POWERFUL INTERCESSOR

	Mon	VI Hour, Qolo	
The Dew that descended on	Tues	Ramso, Qolo	Dan. 3:27
The furnace of Babylon	Thurs	Ramso, Qolo	
	Tues	Ramso, Qolo	
The fortress of David	Wed	Ramso, Qolo	Ps. 18:2, 31:3, 71:3
The dove that was sent by Noah	Tues	Sapro, Qolo	Gen. 8:10
The rain Bow	Tues	Sapro, Qolo	
	Tues	III Hour, Qolo	Gen. 9:13
The ladder which Jacob saw at Bethel	Wed	Ramso, Sedro	
	Thurs	Sapro, Qolo	Gen. 28:11-13
The City of David	Wed	Liliyo, Qolo, Ist Watch	
	Wed	VI Hour, Qolo	Ps. 48:3, 122:3

SECTION III

THE TYPOLOGY OF MARY

'Type' may be defined in general as 'any thing having a symbolic meaning'. Theologically, it means a person, thing or event of old Testament history, prefiguring some person or thing revealed in the New Dispensation. In this section we give some of the main Types which are found in the Old Testament concerning Mary as Mother of God. There are other types too referring to Mary's Prerogatives,—gifts given to her by God,—in view of her divine Motherhood; such as her Virginity, Sinlessness, Immaculate Conception etc. We collected these types mainly from the prayers of the "Book of the Common Prayer" (Translated by Bede Griffiths, Kurusumala Ashram). The scheme that is given at the beginning of this section will be of help to find these types used in the Prayer Book and in the Books of the Old Testament. The same Types are made use of in the prayers of the Books of the 'Crown of the Year' also. Here, we choose a few of these Types that directly signify the divine Motherhood of Mary.

THE SHIP

"Mary was a ship; she bore, she carried, she was leaden with the Pilot who is the Lord of all creation".

Monday, Ramso, Qolo.

"Peace be to you, Mary, holy Virgin, cries the creation; like a ship you carried him who forms infants in the womb; he carried you and you carried him, and the watcher greeted you with a message of peace, blessed is the Lord who came forth from your womb".

Wed. Sapro, Qolo.

Here is a comparison which is paradoxical. A ship is a container. It carries its pilot. Mary is the ship, Jesus, the pilot. The paradox consists in that Mary, the ship, is a creature of God; hence has a beginning. But she carries Jesus, the pilot who is

God, hence without beginning. The one who has a beginning carries the one who is from all eternity. As the Incarnate Son of God, Mary carries Jesus and as God, Jesus carries Mary, his Mother.

THE SECOND HEAVEN

"Holy Mary, Second heaven, in whose bosom rested the Lord of the heights and came forth to drive away the darkness from the face of the earth". Monday, Lilio, I watch, Boutho.

"Peace be with you, full of grace, cried the angel, Second heaven, who bore the Son of God, all generation shall proclaim you greatly blessed because of the child, who came forth from you in holiness". Friday, Lilio, I watch, Qolo.

Heaven is the abode of God. Mary's Womb was his abode for nine months. Hence she was the Second heaven. The presence of God brightens the heavens. There is no shadow of sin in heaven. By making Mary's Womb, his abode, Jesus brightens her soul and body through his merits.

THE FLEETING CLOUD

"Tell me Mary, fleeting cloud, how did you bear the hero of the ages" Tues; Sapro, Qolo

"What shall I call you, blessed Mary,
Virgin Mother of God, Cloud of Flesh,
heaven in which the sun of justice shown-
forth, veil of the godhead whose mystery
was represented by Moses, chariot of flesh,
who were Mother to our Lord according to his will?"
Wed; Ramso, Qolo.

The cloud carries upon its wings the rain. The rain enables the plants to grow on earth. Thirsty earth is satiated with rain. It gives new life to the earth. Mary carried in her womb the rain of justice, the son of God who regenerated humanity which was spiritually dead by sin.

THE CHARIOT OF EZEKIEL:

"Ezekiel the prophet of the exile, saw with the eye of prophecy the daughter of David and fashioned an image of her

beauty by divine revelation, which the Lord showed to him in a wondrous way".

Tues; Sapro, Qolo.

The chariot which Ezekiel saw in his vision had faces and wheels which spoke. Mary had a mouth which sings praises to God. To quote the words of praise from Tuesday, Lilio, I Watch.

> "The chariot which the chosen prophet Ezekiel saw is not equal in beauty to you, holy Virgin Mother, living creatures were yoked to it, the blessed Cherubim; their figures had four faces different from each other; the face of a lion and of an Ox and of an eagle and of a man. But, for you, blessed Mother, your knees were the Chariot, your arms the wheels and your mouth sang praise".

The Ark of the Covenant; the pot containing manna.
The staff of Aaron, The dew and the fleece of Gideon.

THE JAR OF ELIZHA

"In the law and in prophecy, Moses, the head of the prophets represented the figure of the blessed Mother by the ark of the law and the pot of Manna, and by the staff of Aaron, which budded within the Holy of Holies, and by the dew and the fleece of Gideon and by the new jar of Elizha and by the light cloud of the glorious Isaiah".

The ark of Moses contained the law of Yahweh, the law of justification of the old. But Mary carried Christ through whom justification and salvation were brought about for humanity. We read in Romans "For Christ is the end of the law, that everyone who has faith may be justified". (Rom. 10:4,)

THE POT AND MANNA:

It is evident that the pot signifies Mary and the Manna, Jesus, The Manna of the wilderness was bodily food for the pilgrims. But Jesus is the true food that came down from heaven, "For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world" (Jn 6:33) And Mary nurtured this heavenly food.

There is another significance here, which is note-worthy The people of God—Israel—had to be fully convinced that Yahweh is their only God, who guides them, protects them, provides them with whatever they need and hence they should have faith in Him alone, should adore Him alone. Their pilgrimage through the wilderness for forty years and their experience during that journey convinced them of these truths. Salvation is through faith in God. In Mary we find an exemplar 'par excellance' of faith and complete trust in God. It is through her faith that she became the Mother of God.

In the Ark was placed the *rod of Aaron*. It budded in the Sanctuary without earthly watering. So too Mary, without human seed, miraculously conceived and brought forth Jesus.

Mary is the jar of Elizha which contained the Salt-Jesus who seasons all that has lost its Savour. In him is life for the whole world which was lost through sin.

MARY, VIRGIN MOTHER:

We will now see a few *types of Mary as Virgin*. Mary was not only the Mother of God, but she was the Virgin Mother. The burning *Bush which* saw on Mount Sinai.

> "As the fire rested on the bush and the bush was not burnt, so God descended and rested on the Virgin; He was pleased to take flesh from her and he did not break the seal of her Virginity".
>
> Mond: Sapro, Qolo.

The Virginity of Mary, the Mother of God, is understood by the Syrian Church, not merely as her bodily integrity but as a total dedication of her body, mind and soul to the will of God. She placed herself at the disposal of God, her creator. "Let it be done to me according to thy word". She had an undivided heart and she loved God with all the strength of her faculties. She belonged to him totally. She was immaculate from the very moment of her conception and was preserved so by the Grace of God and through her whole hearted co-operation.

THE CLOSED DOOR OF THE CHARIOT OF EZEKIEL:

> "Ezekiel represents you by the closed door, which the Lord alone may enter:

"The door which Ezekiel saw represented you holy Virgin;
Man never entered it but only the Lord; glory to him,
who so humbled himself because of Adam to restore
him to his inheritance". Thursday Sapro, Qolo.

The signification of this type is self-evident

The *closed garden* and the *sealed Fountain* of Solomon.

"O Solomon, fair child, what is that Garden
of which you sang, which was closed and sealed in its
Virginity; it is Mary from whom came forth the Gardener
who planted the paradise". Thurs. Sapro, Qolo

THE PEARL WITHOUT STAIN

"Like a pearl without flaw which is set in the crown of the King, is the holy Virgin, Mother of God; it is turned to all sides and its brightness gives light like the sun".

Mond. Sapro. Qolo.

Mary, in her virginity shines like an immaculate pearl. A pearl is sheltered within the shells of Oyster. In the 'Ekbo' of the morning prayer of Wednesday the church sings "Peace be with you Virgin, pure and holy, peace be with you, ***Pearl without stain***, who bore the mighty one, who causes the creation; all generations shall call you blessed for ever and ever.

THE FLEECE OF GIDEON

"What mind or tongue can suffice to praise the Mother of God. .... pure fleece who received the heavenly rain, Virgin mother who brought forth God".... who took flesh from her.

Tues. Lilio. I Watch. Sedro.

Fleece which received the heavenly rain, no human seed in order that the Son of God might take flesh from her, clearly signifies the Virginal conception of Christ. The fleece of the wool of Gideon was miraculously soaked with dew, while it was dry on the surrounding ground. In the same way the dew, the son of God, remained on the fleece of wool, Mary, in a mysterious way.

These types which have been explained, clearly prove the divine Motherhood of Mary and the singular excellence of her Motherhood. i.e., to be Mother and Virgin at the same time.

SECTION IV

THE PREROGATIVES OF MARY AS MOTHER OF GOD

We have alluded earlier to the promise of God for a deliverer to our first parents soon after their fall. "I shall put enmity between you and the woman and between your seed and her seed; he shall bruise your head and you shall bruise his heel" (Gen. 3:15)

This promise of God was fulfilled when Mary gave birth to Jesus in Bethlahem. "And she gave birth to her first-born son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn." (LK. 2:7)

For this great event God prepared the world through the Patriarchs, prophets, kings and other chosen one. He chose a people for himself—the Israel. He purified them through the crucible of suffering, through exile, slavery, pilgrimage through the wilderness before they were led to the promised land. Through this process God was revealing himself to his people. When the fullness of time came he revealed himself through his own son. "But when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons." (Gal. 4: 4-5) So, from all eternity there was in the plan of God to send his own Son as deliverer of mankind. And from eternity Mary was chosen as the Mother of the Incarnate word. Hence he had prepared Mary, the daughter of the family of David to be a worthy Mother to his Son. So all her prerogatives such as her Virginity, Sinlessness, Purity, Assumption etc. are special gifts given to her in view of her divine Motherhood. This is the reason why 'Devotion to Mary' in the Syrian Church is not para-liturgical; it is an integral part of the Liturgy. Mary is intrinsically connected with the 'Economy of Salvation'. In fact, Mariology developed in the early times along with Christology.

In this section we will see the faith of the Syrian Church in her divine Motherhood and the singular privileges given to her on that account.

1. Virgin and Mother

"The Archangel brought a greeting of peace to the daughter of David and announced to her and said: the Lord is with you and shall come forth from you."

> "Holy Virgin, who was able to bear the hidden power which bears heaven and earth....."
>
> Monday, Ramso, Qolo of the Mother of God.

"Praise—to the holy one, who made holy her who bore him; to the great one who made great the Virgin who was his mother; to the exalted one who looked upon the lowliness of his handmaid and made her the marriage—chamber of his majesty, and who has honoured her festival in the Church, his bride....."

Monday, Lilio, I Watch, Prumion.

The belief of the church that the blessed Virgin Mary was made holy, great and her lowliness was exalted and her festival honoured in the church by God himself in view of her divine motherhood is expressed clearly in this prayer.

> "A young maiden of the house of David, whose name was Mary, was the Chariot which carried the Saviour of the world."
>
> "How to call you, I know not, daughter of David, and what name to give you, Mary, I cannot tell. If I call you Virgin, I see a son who sucks at your breast; If I call you Mother, your Virginity remains; therefore I call you Mother of God, that the learned may be put to shame and the disputant who would question your Motherhood, halleluia, cursed be he who would question it."
>
> Monday Lilio, I Watch, Qolo.

Here we should understand that in the early centuries Mariology developed along with Christology. The divine mystery of the Incarnation is beyond human comprehension. Hence theo-

logical discussions on the subject caused several heresies in the early ages of the church such as Arianism, Nestronianism, Monophysitism etc. As a result of these heresies, wrong notions about the divine Motherhood of Mary too emerged. Against these wrong notions, the Syrian Fathers profess their faith in Mary's divine Motherhood in the above piece of poetry.

> "As the fire rested on the bush and the bush was not burnt, so God descended and rested on the Virgin, he was pleased to take flesh from her and he did not break the seal of her virginity." Mond. Sapro. Qolo.

In the natural order Virginity and maternity cannot remain together in a woman. But they existed at the same time in Mary in a miraculous manner through the operation of the Holy Spirit.

> " ..... to him who while he did not cease to be the Son of his heavenly Father, descended and dwelt in the pure Virgin, Holy Mary, and visited our race in his mercy and compassion..." Tuesday Night Vigil. I Watch. Prumion.

> "Blessed are you, the pride of the whole creation,
> Virgin pure and holy, Mother of the Most High,
> because the word of the Father was pleased to
> take flesh from you, and was born from your purity
> and preserved your Virginity; blessed are you, because
> by you was uprooted the curse of our first Mother,
> and through you we have won Salvation...",
> Night Vigil, I Watch, Qolo.

Mary as second Eve, through the merits of her obedience to God's will delivers mankind from the curse incurred by the first Eve as a result of her disobedience to the will of God.

> "Glory to the Son of God, who was pleased to come
> forth from the blessed holy Virgin, by her ear
> she received him and she bore him in her womb;
> he came forth from her womb and it remained
> sealed and confounded the unbelievers"...
> Wed. Ramso, Qolo

This passage explains Mary's Virginal conception and her giving birth to the Son of God miraculously.

"Blessed are you who became Mother of Him
whom the heaven and earth cannot contain.
Blessed are you who brought forth him before
the majesty of whose power the spirits of
flame tremble. Blessed are you who gave milk
to suck to him who feeds the whole creation".

Wed. Night Vigil. I Watch. Sedro.

This explains the excellence of Mary and her son.

"The Virgin has brought forth a wonder. Come, let us
go and contemplate the Ancient of Ages-
lying in a Manger, wrapped in swaddling cloths;
the Virgin has brought forth an elder, the Ancient
of days; the mighty one who hung the mountains is
carried by a young maiden; the Son who had no
beginning willed to have a beginning and came to
birth and he is without end".

Hymn·

Through the paradoxical expression Mary's motherhood is expressed in this passage.

Elizabeth, the Mother of John and Mary, the mother
Christ, where palaces which the king chose for
himself in barrenness and Virginity; the infant
leapt before the infant, the young before the old,
and greeted his Lord, and said to him: come in peace
and may your peace bring peace to the creation".

Wed. Sapro. Qolo.

Mary's motherhood compared with that of Elizabeth the mother of John the Baptist, the precursor of the Saviour.

"Take your harp, Isiah prophet of the Spirit,
and prophesy about the son of your Lord, how
he came forth into the world. Behold: a Virgin
shall conceive and bear a child who shall be
a wonder and his name shall be called Emmanuel,
which is, God with-us".

Wed. Sapro Qolo

How the prophecy of Isiah the prophet is verified in Mary explained in this passage.

aradox of the mysterious motherhood of Mary:

"Mary said to Christ when she brought him forth:
I do not know what to call you, my son; I will
call you an infant, but you are older than
the ages; I will call you old; but you are
a babe; I will call you the splendour, which
shone forth from the Father and gave light
to the whole creation..." Thursday, Night Vigil-
I Watch. Qolo

dentity of God the Son and Mary's Son:

"It was not one that the Father brought forth
and another that Mary brought forth, but him
whom the Father brought forth the Virgin also brought forth.
His birth from the father was spiritual. His birth from the
Virgin was in the flesh".

Saturday. Night-Vigil- I Watch. Eklo.

In the book of the crown of the year there are several asts in honour of Mary, the mother of God. They are "The nnunciation to the Mother of God'. The visitation of Mary to lizabeth'. The Entrance of Mary in the Temple,' "The conce- tion of the Mother of God,' The praises of the Mother of God' nd 'Mother of God, Mother of Seeds'.

The prayers for the celebration of these feasts are replete ith praises of Mary as Mother of God, as Ever Virgin, as Sinless nd pure, as the powerful Intercessor before God for mankind.

"Behold in your pure womb you shall conceive your creator, he God and the ruler of all cosmic forces".

Feast of the Annunciation, Evening prayer, Response.

Peace be with you, O Daughter of David full of beauty and of high and immensurable glory. You shall remain a virgin and you shall have pure milk. You shall have a goodly child who shall be called Emmanuel". Response.

"Do not fear, O fair one," said the angel, "the Lord is pleased that you should be the Mother of his only Son. You shall

be with child in a holy manner and bring forth the king whose kingdom shall have no end". Hymn.

Word eternal who entered by the ear of the maiden and healed the ancient wound of the house of Adam". Sedro.

"Elizabeth cried out:" By what words can I succeed
in declaring the mysteries which are accomplished in you?
By you is cancelled the account written by Eve, our Mother.
By you is brought to an end the sentence which said:
"In sorrow shall children be born into this world".
'Response'. Visitation of Mary to Elizabeth.

"The Virgin Mary was chosen from the beginning to be the exalted Mother of the word of God. Her noble body was kept in all purity and holiness, and her soul free from all stain. that she might offer pure worship. And the power of the Most High rested in her womb".
Hymn: Entrace in the Temple

2. Mary conceived without sin.

"O you who have faith, this is the beloved and glorious festival when the Virgin Mary, the Daughter of David, was conceived. She who became the Mother of God was conceived pure from every stain and filled with the holiness of the God of our fathers".
(Belief of the Syrian Church in the immaculate Conception of Mary)

In the order of the celebration of the Holy Eucharist too, we find Mary extoled as the Mother of God and her powerful intercession is sought for:-

In the preparatory service, when the general commemoration is made, we pray:

"We recall the memory of our Lord and our God. Saviour Jesus Christ, and of all his saving economy for our sake, especially his annunciation by the angel, his birth in the flesh ..... we recall them at this Eucharist which is set before us first of all our father Adam and our mother Eve, and Mary, the holy Mother of God.....

Again in the Canon of the Mother of God (Great intercesry prayer) we pray:

"Again, we commemorate the holy and blessed and ever-Virgin Mary, mother of God, who is worthy to be blessed and glorified of all generation of the earth."

May her prayers be a stronghold to us: Let us beseech the Lord."

n the Kukilion of the Bl. Virgin Mary we sing:-

"The Archangel brought a message of peace to the daughter of David and announced to her and said: The Lord is with you and shall come forth from you."

"Let the remembrance of Mary be a blessing
And let her intarcession be a fortress to our Souls."

esides, we can see Mariology fully developed in the Sedro Eachanistic prayer) of various feasts of Mary, Mother of God.

SECTION V

MARIOLOGY
IN THE EAST SYRIAN LITURGY

For this Section of the treatise we depend to a great extent on the learned study of the subject made by Dr. Placid J. Padipara C M I. Rfr. Article published in the Xian Orient Vol. II No. 4.

In Section I, the author gives some general notions regarding the church of the East. The origin of this church dates back to the early centuries of Christiandom. This church had other names such as "The Assyrian Church, "The Babylonian Church." "The Chaldean Church", "The Persian Church" and "The Nestorian Church." To what extent does the 'Church of the East' deserve this last name "Nestorian Church" is questioned by the author. In the subsequent section he discusses the Christology of the Church of the East in detail basing himself on the doctrine of Babai the great (7th Cent.) the accepted theologian of the Church and proves that the Coristology of the Church of East could be rightly interpreted according to the Orthodox teaching of the Universal Church. As the corollary of this doctrine, the author affirms that the church of the East professes that Mary, is the Virgin Mother of God the Son. But the church avoids the expression "Mary, Mother of God"- God used, without qualification. She fears that if the word 'God' is used without qualification (without specification) someone may think that the Divine Trinity or any one Person of the Trinity became Incarnate.

In Section III of the Article, the author deals with 'Mariology in the Syrian Church of the East.' In order to explain the same, the author chooses certain passages from the official liturgical prayers of the Church which illustrate the prerogatives of the Mother of the Saviour.

MOTHER OF GOD THE SON:

"O Our Lord and our God, arm us with the powerful and unconquerable weapon (that is) with the prayers of your blessed Mother, and give us with her a part and participation in your heavenly Chamber, Lord of all for ever" Amen."

'An oration from the vespers of Ordinary Wednesdays.'

(It may be noted here that all Wednesdays are dedicated to the honour of Mary, Mother of God in the Syrian Church)

In this passage Christ, the Son of God, is called "Our God", since the Son of God is Emmanuel- God with us i. e. "Our God". Mary is the Mother of our God....

"The only begotten, the Son of God came to the World, was born from the Virgin in a manner above nature and extraordinary."

'Common Hymn, sung before the reading of the Gospel.' The Son of God is said to be born from the Virgin (Mary) So Mary is the Mother of God the Son.

'Hail, mother of the child that does not grow old.'

Night office for the feast of X'mas.

Here, the allusion is to the eternity of the child of Mary i.e. this child is God and so Mary is the Mother of God the child eternal.

Again,

"Praise to the child whose Father (is) in heaven, and whose Mother (is) on earth, (and who) is incomprehensible."

The meaning is clear. Mary is the Mother of the Son of God the Father.

Again,

"Blessed be the Word that was made flesh and was born from the Virgin."

Again,

"Blessed be the One who is born twice: eternally and in the human manner: eternally before the worlds, and to-day (X'mas day) in time."

Hence, Mary is the Mother of God the Son, which is the same as the "Theotokos of Ephesus."

Another extract that is adduced is, the profession of faith of Iso-Yahb, Archbishop of Nisibis sent to the Pope in 1247. This profession of faith explains the faith of the Syrian Chaldean Church in the devine Motherhood of Mary. It runs thus:-

"There are words of various significations and this word 'Christ' signifies perfect God and perfeet Man', but this word 'God' signifies the Trinity, and stands for the Father, and stands for the son, and stands for the Holy Spirit; and when it is said Mary brought forth 'God, the unlearned may some times think that she brought forth the Trinity, or the Father, or the Holy Spirit.

Since therefore, explanation is necessary and since Christ is God the Son united, it will be of one word when we say "Mary brought forth Christ"—one word briefly comprising the Divinity and humanity. Hence there is one Christ, one Son, one in two natures (Namely) in Divinity 'and humanity, one individual one person."

Rfr. Giamil S. 'Theologia Dogmation Christianorum Orientalium Catholica Dissidentium: Vol. V. Documn. II.

EVER VIRGIN

"The Holy Spirit decended in her mansion, ***the palace sealed*** and humble, and in it the Son of the Most High dwelt, and the ***seal of her Virginity attests (this)***".

"The son who is born eternally from the Father was incarnate without change in the ***Womb sealed with Virginity***"
'Christmas Night Office':

"You are the great eternal light and the hidden splendour of the unspherical (i. e. illimitted), Sun who were born from the rational sphere (i. e. limited creature), the Second Heaven, ***the ever Virgin***. You who shone forth from the ***Womb sealed with Virginity***"

"(O) Christ who made us worthy to celebrate the commemoration of your Mother who carried you in her Womb nine

months and *brought you forth in Virginity* have mercy on us".
Feast of the Bl. Virgin Mary after X'mas; Matins.

"Like the rod of Aaron which sprouted, the *Virgin* conceived. That (rod) without being planted and without drink (without being watered), did sprout, Mary without a man and without seal, conceived".

Ibid; Ode of Vespers.

"(O) Womb which *no man has known, nor did any man* approach *it* in his day, and which the Most High *did seal it apart* and make it a temple for His Son". Ibid. Night Office

These passages clearly signify the Virginity of Mary. The word *'to seal'* points to the corporal virginal integrity. Mary is ever Virgin – before, in and after the birth of Christ.

SINLESS:

Mary is often called the 'Second Heaven'. In heaven there has been no sin. A sinner can never be in heaven.

"In her Womb she bore fire, and in her body she solemnly carried a tabernacle, in her soul the spirit over-shadowed (dwelt) and *she was all and in all heaven*. As I hold, she is *more precious, higher and more exalted than heaven* – Our Lord remained hidden in heaven without redeeming the human race until there was for him a dwelling place ..... she was not entangled in (inordinate) desire, and by sin she was not torn Assunder".

'Night Office for the feast of the B. V. Mary after Christmas.

"(we praise) you.... who are born from the Father eternally, and in time from the Second Heaven the ever Virgin, Treasure of Grace, deposit of heavenly riches, fruit of heavenly sanctity, Mansion of the Holy spirit....

If Mary was the Second Heaven, and was more precious, higher and more exalted than (the first) heaven which is the special abode of God, if she was not torn assunder by sin, certainly she was conceived sinless (immaculate) and continued to be always sinless. The qualifications that are said of Mary fount of heavenly sanctity', 'Mansion of the Holy Spirit' etc. are clear allusions to the doctrine of the 'Immaculate conception of Mary.

In the prayer composed by St. Ephrem for the feast of the Immaculate conception, we read:

> "You alone and your mother (are) very
> beautiful among all in all things, For,
> O Lord, there is no stain nor is there
> any dirt in your Mother.
> (Cited by Ortiz, Urbina S. J. Symposium Syriacum, Roma 1974)

ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY:

The definition of the dogma of the Corporal Assumption of our lady was made by Pope Pius XII. But the feast of the 'Sunaya' (transitus: death) of the Bl. V. Mary was celebrated prior to this definition in the church of the East. For it is seen in their Office published in 1886.

> "Blessed are you, for, on the day of your 'Sunaya' you had swiftness (You made your swift course) with the Angels and they came down and with honour accompanied *Your Soul with your holy body*".
> (Ode of vispers of the feast of Sunaya)

In the Middle East the non-Catholic Jacobites keep the fifteen days' fast in honour of the Assumption of Our Lady and in their Divine Office for this feast the Jacobites sing that our Lady was taken into heaven body and soul. The members of the Non-Catholic churches of the Middle East do not in any way complain or made remark at the Jacobites for this, while in some other things they attack them. They have complained against Catholics for having introduced new feasts with Divine Office; but about the feast of Assumption and its office they are silent.

SECTION VI

EFFICACIOUS INTERCESSION OF THE MOTHER OF GOD

When we think of the intercession of the Mother of God on our behalf, the first thing that, perhaps, comes to our mind is the words of the Apostle:

> "For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and man, Christ Jesus, who gave himself as ransom for all, the testimony to which was borne at the proper time".
>
> I Tim: 2:5-6.

How could therefore be another intercessor other than the only mediator Christ, the Redeemer? But there is no contradiction here, for, Mary's intercession only manifests the power of Christ's intercession. Her intercession takes its effect from her motherhood of Christ, the mediator. It has its effect through the mediation of Christ, the Redeemer.

> "Mary's function as Mother of men in no way obscures or dimishes the unique mediation of Christ, but rather shows its power. But the Blessed Virgins' salutary influence on men originates not in any inner necessity but in the disposition of God. It flows forth from the superabundance of the merits of Christ, rests on his mediation, depends entirely on it and draws all its power from it. It does not hinder in any way the immediate union of the faithful with Christ, but on the contrary fosters it" Vat II, Lumen Gentium. No. 60.

Again No.62 of the same Dogmatic Constitution explains how Mary's Motherhood extends to all men for whom Christ her son gave himself as ransom.

> "This motherhood of Mary in the order of grace continues uninterruptedly from the consent which she loyally gave at the

Annunciation and which she sustained without wavering beneath the Cross, until the eternal fulfilment of all the elect. Taken up to heaven she did not lay aside this saving office but by her manifold intercession continues to bring us the gifts of eternal salvation. By her maternal charity she cares for the brethren of her son, who still journey on earth surrounded by dangers and difficulties, until they are led into their blessed home. Therefore the Blessed Virgin is invoked in the Church under the titles of Advocate, Helper, Benefactress and Mediatrix. This, However, is so understood that it neither takes away anything from nor adds anything to the dignity and efficacy of Christ,- the one Mediator".

With these notions of Mary as the Mother of the Church and her intercession on behalf of the faithful, let us examine how this is upheld in the liturgical traditions of the Syrian Church.

FILIAL APPROACH OF THE FAITHFUL TO THEIR MOTHER:

"Holy Virgin, Mother who gave birth to God, beseech your only begotten Son, that he may have mercy on us all".

The Virgin, who was able to bear the hidden power which bears heaven and earth, behold, She interceds with him by her prayers on behalf of sinners, who call on her in faith, halleluia, May her prayer be with us". Mon. Ramso, Qolo.

Childlike confidence in the intercession of Mary:

"Virgin Mother of God, your memory is a benediction, respond to the petition of those who are far and near, give health to him who is in distress, by your prayer and intercession may mercy be shown to us, halleluia, may your prayer assist us".
Night Vigil, I Watch, Qolo.

Boutho (supplication song) of Mar Jacob of Sarug on all days of the week extols Mary's powerful intercession. It always begins:

"May your prayer be with us, O blessed one,
May your prayer be always with us
May the Lord hear your prayers and be gracious to us".

And the concluding stanza reads thus:

"By the prayer of her who carried you for nine months, son of God remove from us the scourge of wrath".

Mary's intercession is a high fortress:

"In you we take refuge every day, Mother of God, and in your prayer as in a high fortress we take shelter; pray and beseech your only son that he may make his peace and tranquility rest on the four quarters of the earth".

Tues. Ramso, Qolo.

Mary, the Second Eve contrasted with the first,

"By you was uprooted the evil of our
first mother and through you we have won
salvation; May your prayer assist us"

Night Vigil, I Watch. Qolo.

Mary's intercession sought because of her divine Motherhood,

"O Daughter of David, you have great freedom
with that king who disposes of all kings,
we beseech you, pearl without flaw,
to intercede for us with that fruit which
came forth from you"

Wed. Ramso, Boutho.

Mary's prayers are always answered:

"By your prayers which are always heard
and by the grace of the only Son who
came forth from your Womb...."
"By the prayers of your Mother, we beseech
you our Saviour, make your peace and
calm dwell in the four quarters of the earth".

Sapro, Qolo.

Mary, given as Mother to the Church:

"Mary was a second heaven to you, Lord
of all, and you dwelt in her in holiness
and came forth from her into the world;
when you were suffering on the Cross, you
gave her in trust to your disciple; by
the prayers of your Mother, we beseech you,
Our Saviour, to make your peace and calm
dwell in the four quarters of the earth".

Sapro, Qolo.

FEAST OF THE PRAISES OF THE MOTHER OF GOD:

"At all times you are our high refuge
and our firm support,
you who are full of beauty.
By the power of your prayers May mercy be shown
to all those who honour the day of your remembrance".

"Mother of God, on the day of your festival,
offer to God petitions for all those who venerate you.
Pray the Lord that we may have peace and tranquility,
so that we may celebrate your festival with joy."

Ramso, Response.

The Universality of Mary's intercession:

"In your memory, holy Virgin, Mother of God,
We offer prayer and petitions with incense
to the one beloved Son who was born of you
May the church be protected with all her people.
May her pastors and leaders serve with reverence and holiness
And all the orders in her.
May his graciousness and compassion
be felt up to the ends of the world,
and they will offer praise and thanksgiving for ever."

'Prayer for the offering of incense.'

Mary the field interceding he fruit:

"Blessed field, intercede for us
and ask of him who is the fruit of life
that he may be gracious to us and to the whole world."

Night Vigil, Supplication

Since Mary is the Mother of the Son of God, her intercession is all powerful, because her Son is the Almighty God. Since we are her children in the order of Grace, she has a maternal heart and concern for us. Hence with filial trust and confidence we can approach her in all our needs and her intercession will be a stronghold to us.

CONCLUSION:

In conclusion we would like to point out some other liturgical traditions that prove the faith of the Syrian Church in the divine Motherhood of Mary.

They are:

i) Churches dedicated to the honour of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

ii) Liturgical practices of holding special prayers and fast in preparation for the Feasts of the Blessed Virgin.

iii) Para-liturgical devotions prevalent among the Syrian Christians.

From the very early centuries of Christianity, Churches and other places of Worship were dedicated in honour of the blessed Virgin Mary under several titles. For example in the Holy Lands:

Sancta Maria ad Probaticam (Nativity of Mary)
Sancta Maria in Monte Sion (Dormition of Mary)
Sancta Maria in Valle, Josephat (Sepulchre of Mary)
Rfr. 'Enchridion Locorum Sanctorum',
Franciscan Printing Press, Jerusalem, 1982.

The same practice was followed in the regions where the Syrian Church flourished. A good number of the ancient and modern churches of our own country are dedicated to the honour and patronage of Mary.

Special Prayers and fast are practised in preparation for the Feasts of Mary, for example:
Feast of the Nativity of our Lady,
Feast of the Assumption (Sunoyo)

Besides, the ancient practice of keeping Vigil, fast and abstinence on Wednesday, the day dedicated to the devotion of Mary, all these prove the genuine faith of the Syrian Church in Mary, the Mother of God.

QUESTIONNAIRE

I "Liturgy is the celebration of the Economy of Salvation" Substantiate the statement basing on the Liturgy of the Syrian Church.

II What is the role of Mary in the "Economy of Salvation"?

III Compare and contrast the experience of the Divine Mysteries of the Western and Eastern Churches and their differences in the mode of expression.

IV Which are the common 'types' regarding the divine Motherhood and Virginity of Mary in the Liturgical Books of the Syrians?

V "Mary is the Mother of God". Explain the title as understood by the followers of Nestorius.

VI "For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus' (I Tim. 2:5)
Does Mary's intercession,' Contradict this scriptural statement? Discuss

VII Write short notes on the following Liturgical usages:-

i) 'The son of God *inclined the heavens* and came on earth'.

ii) 'Mary, the thirsty earth'.

iii) 'Peace be with you Full of Grace.'

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[Rev. Dr. V. C. Samuel, Orthodox Theological Seminary, Kottayam]

2 **The Church in the Syriac Tradition**

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4 **Philoxenos of Mabbug**

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